UNITED
NATIONS

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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/24042
30 May 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 30 MAY 1992 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF AUSTRALIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

As the Australian Government and people have witnessed the tragic slide of the Balkan area into deeper and ever more senseless violence, we have felt a growing sense of horror and outrage. Australia is far from the Balkans. But very many Australians have their roots in the region. They feel deeply what is happening to their families and to their history and culture. So, our concern has a solid basis in fact, as well as in terms of universal principles.

The tragedy in the Balkans first affected Slovenia, then engulfed Croatia and is now destroying Bosnia and Herzegovina. The last few days have seen particularly violent attacks on the centre of Sarajevo. The international community cannot watch this violence passively.

Working through the European Community and the United Nations, the international community has tried many means of seeking to ensure that the parties settle their dispute peacefully. Negotiations, mediation and arbitration have been attempted. Positive and negative economic measures have been instituted by many countries, including Australia, to try to bring about an end to the violence. Peace monitors and peacekeepers have been sent to the area by a diverse collection of countries which have no other motive but to put an end to the senseless violence.

And yet the violence has not abated; indeed it has become even more cruel to the civilian populations of the region, over 1 million of whom have been forced to flee their homes.

The Austrlian Prime Minister and Foreign Minister have noted that all the parties to the conflict carried some responsibility for its continuation but, like many other leaders in the international community, they have come to the conclusion that Serbia and Montenegro carry the principal burden of responsibility. This is evidenced by the scale and inhumanity of the activities of the Yugoslav People's Army and of the irregular Serbian forces which are either under the direction of the authorities in Belgrade or over which those authorities have not attempted to assert effective control.

That is why there is no escaping the need to bring home to Serbia and Montenegro the unacceptability of their conduct. Australia therefore urges the Council to adopt the draft resolution currently before it.

In supporting this specific sanctions regime against Serbia and Montenegro, the intention of the Australian Government is not to inflict hurt on the Serbian and Montenegrin people but to demonstrate to their Governments the unacceptability of their current policies.

The Australian Government hopes that the sanctions regime need not last long. The aim of the sanctions is to bring the violence and conflict to an end without delay.

It follows that we would hope to see sanctions lifted as soon as a political solution is reached and the fighting has come to a stop. That solution and that end is our objective.

I would be grateful if you could have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Richard BUTLER AM
Permanent Representative
of Australia
to the United Nations